

MSL Online Program

Admissions Information and Application Instructions

These instructions apply to the online program only. If you are interested in the residential program, please begin a new application and select the online option.

Northwestern Pritzker School of Law is proud to offer the [Master of Science in Law](#) degree (MSL), which provides focused training in intellectual property, regulatory analysis, and business/entrepreneurship for students with backgrounds in science, technology, engineering, math, and medicine. The MSL Program exposes technically-trained students to the legal, business, regulatory, and policy issues they encounter in their careers.

Program Formats

The MSL Program is offered in three formats: residential full-time, residential part-time, and online part-time. This application is for the online part-time format, which can be completed in 2-4 years. The online format includes a one-week residential requirement - called the Power Week - offered each year around the middle of May. The online program is open to domestic and international students. International students will need a Visa for the one-week residential Power Week component of the program.

There are two start dates each year for the online program: the fall start date is in August and the spring start date is in January.

Admissions

To be eligible to apply for admission to the MSL Program at Northwestern Law, all applicants (except for those applying to the BA-MSL or BS-MSL programs) must have a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university or have completed the equivalent of six semesters from an accredited college or university and expect to graduate during the current academic year. Applicants must have a STEM background, either in the form of an educational degree or substantial work experience in a STEM field.

The Admissions Committee will base its selection decisions on each applicant's "fit" with the MSL Program, looking at a number of factors, including the applicant's statement of interest, academic record, application information, letter(s) of recommendation, extracurricular activities, work experience, leadership ability, personal circumstances, and other information.

Admissions Process and Application Deadlines

Although we seek to keep applicants informed of their application status and the receipt of documents, it is each applicant's responsibility to ensure that all parts of the application are received by the applicable deadline. The Admissions Committee does not review incomplete applications. Upon submission of an application, applicants will be provided with instructions on how to check the status of their applications via an online tool.

Application Fee

There is no fee to apply to the MSL Program.

Deadlines

For the spring (January), 2019 start of the online program, applications are accepted in two rounds:

- First Round Deadline: **August 15**
- Second Deadline: **October 1**

For the Fall (August), 2019 start of the online program, applications are accepted during three rounds:

- First Round Deadline: **January 31**

- Second Deadline: **April 1** –final deadline for international applicants
- Third Deadline: **June 1**

Each admissions deadline will trigger review of all completed applications that have been submitted by that deadline. On occasion, the Admissions Committee may also review applications on a rolling basis between deadlines.

Notifications

Applicants will be informed of the Admissions Committee's decisions within three weeks of the application deadlines.

Deposits

Students who are accepted into the program must secure their place in the class with a nonrefundable deposit of \$750, which will ultimately be applied toward tuition and fees. Each application round will have a deposit deadline, which is typically within one month of the admissions decision.

Deferrals

Admitted students may request a deferral from the Admissions Committee by submitting a written statement explaining the reason for the request. Deferral decisions are in the sole discretion of the Admissions Committee; good cause must be shown before a deferral will be granted. To effectuate a deferral, the admitted student must submit a nonrefundable deposit of \$750, which will ultimately be applied toward tuition and fees. A subsequent, additional nonrefundable deposit of \$750 (also applied to tuition and fees) will be required during the admissions cycle leading up to the year of the student's actual enrollment in the MSL Program.

Tuition

Tuition information is available [here](#). Applicants should expect a modest tuition increase each year.

The MSL Application Process

The MSL application requires a number of different parts, and these parts vary depending on whether the applicant is a domestic or international student, and whether the applicant is applying to the general MSL Program or to one of the special Northwestern programs (BA-MSL or BS-MSL).

Application Components

All applicants must submit the following items:

- Application (to be completed online)
- Statement of Interest
- One Letter of Recommendation
- Current Resume or Curriculum Vitae
- Transcript from each university attended* (undergraduate and graduate)
- Personal interview via online platform (Kira). (Kira interview request will be sent once the applicant submits their application)

** Please note: Transcripts submitted as part of the application, may be unofficial copies, or screenshots of transcripts viewed online. If admitted, students will need to submit official transcripts prior to enrolling.*

Applicants are free to submit additional optional information, including:

- Unofficial standardized test score reports (GMAT, GRE, LSAT, or MCAT)
- Additional letters of recommendation

Northwestern University BA-MSL and BS-MSL applicants must submit:

- One additional letter of recommendation

International applicants must submit:

- TOEFL/IELTS score or a TOEFL/IELTS waiver request

Statement of Interest

The Statement of Interest allows applicants to introduce themselves to the Admissions Committee. The statement should be 500-800 words and it should include information addressing all four of the following topics (five, if the applicant does not have a degree in a STEM subject):

- *Why you are interested in studying in the MSL Program*
- *How your past academic and professional experiences prepare you to study in this particular program*
- *How you hope to use the knowledge gained from the MSL Program to achieve your career goals*
- *Your readiness to study in an online program, which requires strong self-motivation and time management skills.*
- *If you do not have a degree in a STEM field, please explain your STEM background and/or professional experience in a STEM field.*

Letter of Recommendation

The recommender should be a previous or current professor or employer, or another person familiar with the applicant's qualifications for the MSL Program. (Note: Applicants should not use family members, friends, or peer-level colleagues as recommenders.) The process for obtaining a recommendation is as follows:

1. Identify a recommender;
2. Let the recommender know you would like them to serve as a recommender and obtain their agreement.
3. After steps #1 and 2 are completed, provide the recommender's contact information on the online application form.

Once the applicant adds the recommender's contact information to the online form, the MSL application system will send an email to the recommender, along with a link and instructions for how to upload the recommendation to the applicant's file. This email must go directly to the recommender; applicants should not send the email to themselves and then forward it to the recommender. Since you do not have direct control over when the letter of recommendation is submitted, please be sure to request your letter as early in the application process as possible as your application will not be considered complete until the letter of recommendation is received.

Resume / Curriculum Vitae

A description of prior employment and education, as well as achievements and publications, should be included in a 1-2 page resume/CV written in English.

Standardized Test Scores and Other Optional Information

While students are not required to take or submit a standardized test to apply for the MSL Program (apart from TOEFL or IELTS for international students; see below), applicants are free to submit standardized test scores as part of their applications. Test scores – such as one or more of the GMAT, GRE, LSAT, and MCAT – often help to flesh out or fortify an application.

Transcripts

Applicants should upload an unofficial copy of all undergraduate and graduate transcripts to their application. In most cases, unofficial copies of transcripts will be sufficient for the Admissions Committee to review a file; in cases where the unofficial transcripts are not sufficient, the Admissions Committee will request official transcripts. Prior to enrollment, all students must arrange to submit official, sealed copies of undergraduate and graduate transcripts to the Admissions Office.

Please note: If admitted to the program, students who have received a degree from an institution outside of the US will have an additional step to complete - submitting a WES evaluation. Information

about the WES evaluation process can be found below.

Admitted domestic and international applicants who have received an undergraduate or graduate degree from an institution outside of the US (including its territories and Canada) must also provide an outside evaluation of their transcripts from the [World Education Services](#) (WES), a credential evaluation services that authenticates foreign transcripts. Admitted students must submit the [WES ICAP package](#), and select the "course by course" evaluation option. The WES evaluation must be received within one month of the applicable deposit deadline or prior to completing the visa application paperwork for international students who require a visa. We encourage applicants who have studied outside the U.S. to begin the WES process early, so as to expedite the application/admissions/enrollment process. For more information, visit www.wes.org; check the "Required Documents" information specific to your country of study.

English Language Proficiency

Students in the MSL Program must have a high level of English language aptitude; the Admissions Committee relies on a test of English proficiency for students who are not native speakers of English. International applicants to the program who do not have English as their native language are required to submit an official TOEFL or IELTS test score by the application deadline; the minimum acceptable TOEFL score is 100 and the minimum IELTS score is 7.0.

The English proficiency examination must be taken before an admission decision can be rendered. Applicants should request to have an official copy of their scores sent by ETS (TOEFL) or IELTS directly to the Northwestern Law Admissions Office – the Law School's code is 1565. The Law School will accept scores up to two years after the test date. For further information about the TOEFL examination, contact the [Educational Testing Service](#).

Applicants who do not achieve the minimum score on the English language proficiency test may request an evaluative interview from the Admissions Committee. Interviews are allowed at the discretion of the Admissions Committee in cases where the test score may not be indicative of the applicant's ability. Students who wish to pursue this option should complete the [evaluative interview request form](#).

The English language proficiency requirement may be waived if (1) the applicant has completed an undergraduate or graduate degree at an institution where the language of instruction is English or (2) in exceptional circumstances, such as previous exposure to English language and after an evaluative interview. To apply for a waiver of the English proficiency examination requirement, applicants should submit the [TOEFL / IELTS Waiver Request Form](#). The Admissions Committee will grant waivers on a case-by-case basis, at its sole discretion.

International applicants for the Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences BA-MSL or McCormick School of Engineering BS-MSL Program are automatically granted a TOEFL / IELTS waiver and do not need to submit proof of English proficiency.

The Law School has an English as a Second Language Program (ESL) to help students improve their English language skills and, more generally, to assist students with the challenges of being advanced English-language learners at a U.S. law school. In addition, many MSL students choose to attend the Legal English and Foundations Program ([LEAF](#)) in the summer before they begin the MSL Program.

Visa Requirements

Applicants who require a visa (F-1 or J-1) to study in the United States may request a certificate of eligibility from Northwestern University. To qualify for the I-20 or DS-2019, international students must be admitted to the MSL Program and must demonstrate their ability to fund one year of graduate study at the Law School. For additional information about visa options and federal regulations, please contact the [International Office](#) at Northwestern University.

Scholarships

The Law School grants a limited number of partial MSL scholarships for full-time students, awarded on the basis of merit and need. After admission decisions have been communicated, admitted students will be asked to complete a scholarship application form.

Applicants may be eligible for additional scholarship awards if they: are currently working toward a STEM PhD; have already earned a STEM PhD; are postdoctoral fellows who do not receive a tuition reimbursement benefit; or are applying to the Northwestern University BA-MSL or BS-MSL programs.

Loans

Many MSL students - both full-time and part-time - can qualify for student loans. U.S. citizens and permanent residents are generally eligible for Federal [student loans](#).

U.S. citizens and permanent residents who wish to apply for a Federal student loan should submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to determine eligibility. The FAFSA form is available [online](#).

Applicants who are not eligible for Federal student loans may qualify for a university-administered or other [private loan](#) program. Loans for international students require a credit-worthy U.S. citizen/permanent resident co-signer. If a U.S. co-signer is not possible, applicants should investigate loan opportunities in their home countries.

Instructions for completing the financial aid application will be provided via email to admitted students after their admissions decisions are made.

Bar Examination

The MSL degree does not qualify its graduates to take a bar examination or to practice law.

Northwestern University Disclosure

Northwestern University reserves the right to change without notice any statement in this publication concerning, but not limited to, rules, policies, tuition, fees, curricula, and courses.

It is the policy of Northwestern University not to discriminate against any individual on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, age, disability, or veteran status in matters of admissions, employment, housing, or services or in the educational programs or activities it operates, in accordance with civil rights legislation and University commitment. Any alleged violations of this policy or questions regarding the law with respect to nondiscrimination should be directed to Director of Equal Employment Opportunity, Affirmative Action, and Disability Services, 720 University Place, Evanston, Illinois 60208-1147, phone 847-491-7458; Office of the Provost, Rebecca Crown Center, Evanston, Illinois 60208-1101.

Northwestern University policy ensures that no qualified student with a disability will be denied the benefits of, excluded from participation in, or otherwise subject to discrimination in any University program or activity. In response to a request made by a qualified student with a documented disability, the University will arrange, at no cost to the student, for the provision of educational auxiliary aids, including sign language interpreters, real-time captioners, note takers, readers, and tutors, determined by the University to be necessary to afford such student the opportunity for full participation in University programs.

In exceptional circumstances, Northwestern University Pritzker School of Law reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to waive any documentation normally required for admission. It also reserves the right to admit or deny an applicant admission whenever it believes that it has sufficient evidence for the decision. At the discretion of the University, supporting documents that are received more than one month after the application form may not be incorporated into the admission decision.

